DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 260 720 IR 051 221

AUTHOR Kaplowitz, Joan
TITLE A Pre and Post Test Evaluation of the English 3--Library Instruction Program at UCLA.
PUB DATE [Jan 84]
NOTE 15p.; Synopsis of M.L.S. Thesis, University of California at Los Angeles.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Academic Libraries; College English; Course Evaluation; Higher Education; *Information Seeking; Library Guides; *Library Instruction; *Library Research; *Library Skills; Statistical Significance; Student Attitudes; Use Studies
IDENTIFIERS *Course Integrated Library Instruction; *University of California Los Angeles

ABSTRACT

Pre- and posttests were administered to approximately one-third of the students (241) who participated in the University of California at Los Angeles' (UCLA) English 3--Library Instruction Program. The program's effect on the students' library related behavior was evaluated, and changes in library usage, attitudes toward libraries and librarians, and understanding of basic library skills were studied. Statistical analysis of the data indicated that students scored significantly higher on the posttest than on the pretest. This suggests that the program is benefiting the students at UCLA and is an effective way of offering bibliographic instruction to every student enrolled at UCLA. This report, a synopsis of the full report by the same title, includes a description of the UCLA library system and the English 3--Library Instruction Program; a discussion of the methods used to conduct the pre- and posttest evaluation; the results (including three tables showing mean scores for all subjects, upperclassmen only, and non-participants); and a general discussion of the study. (Author/THC)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED260720

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

A PRE AND POST TEST EVALUATION OF THE ENGLISH 3- LIBRARY INSTRUCTION PROGRAM AT UCLA*

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Joan Kaplowitz

Education and Psychology Library

UCLA

Los Angeles, CA. 90024

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Joan Kaplowitz

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

*This report is a synopsis of the full report by the same title which was submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the MLS degree from the Graduate School of Library and Information Science, UCLA.

IR051221

ABSTRACT

Pre and post tests were administered to approximately 1/3 of the students who participated in UCLA's English 3-Library Instruction Program. The program's effect on the students' library related behavior was evaluated. Changes in library usage, attitude toward libraries and librarians, and understanding of basic library skills were studied. Statistical analysis of the data indicated that students scored significantly higher on the post-test than on the pre-test. This suggests that the program is benefiting the students at UCLA and is an efficient and effective way of offering BI to every student enrolled at UCLA.

I. INTRODUCTION

The UCLA library system is both large and complex. It houses its collection of over five million volumes in eighteen libraries scattered from one end of the campus to the other. The student at UCLA who needs to make use of the resources of this vast system can sometimes be overwhelmed by it and at a loss about how and where to begin. Under these circumstances, some form of bibliographic instruction (BI) becomes a necessity, a fact long recognized by the librarians who work in this complicated library environment.

Of the eighteeen libraries only two, the University Research Library and the College Library, house general collections. The other sixteen are subject specific libraries. The bulk of BI is undertaken by librarians in the University Research Library and the College Library. However, College Library was designed for undergraduates and has taken on the special responsibility of instructing the new and frequently library naive student. Over the years College Library has supported many forms of BI. One such project is the English 3-Library Instruction Program which began operation in September, 1982. The program combines the library lecture technique with an in-house hands-on exercise and is co-sponsored by College Library and the English department's Freshman Writing Program. The library instruction itself is attached to a lower division course in basic English composition entitled English 3. Since this is a required course, this BI program has the potential of reaching every UCLA student at some point in their college career.

The program works in the following manner. During the first three weeks of the quarter, each English 3 class, as a group, meets in a

classroom located in the College Library. This meeting takes place during their regularly scheduled English 3 meeting time. The first part of this 50 minute session consists of a lecture by a UCLA librarian plus a twelve minute long slide tape on library search strategy. Following the tape, the students move into the main reading room of the library to replicate the search strategy on their own. The in-library exercise gives the students first hand experience with encyclopedias, the Library of Congress Subject Headings list, the card catalog, periodical indexes and the UCLA serials list which is on microfiche. The lecturer-librarian is assisted by two other UCLA librarians during this in-library exercise.

During its first year of operation the English 3-Library Instruction Program reached 3,376 students in about 175 different sections of English 3. Although most students were freshmen and sophomores, there were a small percentage of students who for one reason or the other had postponed fulfilling this requirement until their junior or senior years. These upper division students tended to enroll in sections of English 3 especially designated for them and were, therefore, not intermixed with lower division students. About 20% of the English 3 students fell into this category.

An evaluation of this program was conducted by this investigator as part of her responsibility as the College Library Intern during the academic year 1982-83. The problems of developing a method to evaluate the effectiveness of a BI program are many and varied.[1] The standard objective tests of library skills that are available may not be suitable to the particular program being evaluated. These tests tend to address themselves to the acquisition of finite and concrete bits of information and fail to

look at the whole picture.[2,3,4] Most importantly, they neglect the issue of measuring attitudinal change as a result of BI. As Kirk[5] points out, a student should leave the program with more than just a body of skills. He/she should have obtained a more positive attitude toward the library and librarians, leading to a greater use of the library whenever information is needed, even after leaving the academic environment.

The method developed to evaluate the English 3-Library Instruction Program at UCLA attempts to deal with some of these issues. This evaluation measures library usage, attitudes toward the library and librarians, as well as specific library skills. The technique is based on one used in a 1981 study of UCLA's Information Resources and Libraries class done by Donna Bentley.[6]

II. METHODS

Based on information gathered from interviews with those people in both the library and the Freshman Writing Program who were involved in the development of the program, a pre- and post-test evaluation procedure was designed. These tests were divided into three parts. Questions 1-6 dealt with how much the student used the library, questions 7-16 represented an attitude scale measuring the student's feelings about libraries and librarians, and questions 17-28 tested the student's skills with specific library materials. Two versions of these tests were developed. These versions (A and B) were identical except for questions 17-28 or the library skills questions. Copies of the tests are available on request.

Seventeen sections of English 3 out of a possible 54 were randomly selected to act as subjects in this study. Thirteen of the 17 sections were specifically for freshman and the rest were earmarked for upper classmen only.

Each student who participated in this evaluation was assigned a survey number which was recorded on his/her pre- and post-test. Once the survey number was assigned, the student's name was no longer used in any of the following analyses. Since each student's specific pre- and post-test were identified by survey number, difference scores for each student could be computed. These difference scores were used in all the following analyses unless otherwise stated. In all cases the three parts of the survey were treated independently.

III. RESULTS

T-tests comparing the usage, attitude and skills scores for the A and B versions as pre-test indicated that the differences between the scores were not significant. This was also the case when the tests were used as post-tests.

The mean pre- and post-test scores for all 241 subjects on the three parts of the tests appears in Table 1.

Table 1

Each of the students' scores were converted into difference scores and T-tests for the difference between the means for paired observations were computed. In all cases the post-test scores were significantly higher than the pre-test scores ($p < .01$).

Although English 3 is designated a freshman class, a small percentage of students defer this class to later years. The English Department

assigns these upper class students to separate sections of English 3. Thirty-two such students in four different sections of English 3 participated in this study. Their mean pre- and post-test scores appear in Table 2.

Table 2

T-tests on the difference scores of these students indicated that their mean scores were significantly different for usage, attitude and skills ($p < .01$). All these students scored higher on their post-tests than on their pre-tests.

Thirty-one students completed the pre- and post-tests, but did not attend the library session. Most of these students were in upperclass sections. Students in these sections were given the option of not attending the library session, if they felt they already knew how to use the library. Freshmen were not given this option. The mean scores for these students appear in Table 3. None of these differences proved significant after T-tests on the students' difference scores were computed.

Table 3

Since these students chose to by-pass the library session on the grounds that they were already library knowledgeable, it was felt it might be interesting to compare these students' pre-test scores with the scores of the 241 students who did attend the library lesson. T-tests comparing mean pre-test usage, attitude and skills scores for these two groups indicated that the difference between the groups was not significant. The pre-test scores of students who chose not to attend the library were no better than the pre-test scores of those who did attend the library session.

A primary concern of any study which uses a pre- and post-test design is that differences between performance on the two tests is due to differences in degrees of difficulty between the tests themselves.

Statistical analysis of the scores obtained on the two versions of the test, used either as a pre-test or a post-test, indicated that the two versions were equivalent in difficulty. Therefore, any difference between the pre- and post-test situation could be viewed as real. Since both versions were being viewed as equivalent, the scores of all subjects could be pooled into one large sample.

IV. DISCUSSION

The overwhelming result of this study is that students who participated in the English 3-Library Instruction Program did significantly better on the post-test than on the pre-test. They appeared to use the library more often, had a more positive attitude toward the library and its staff and were more knowledgeable about the organization of information in a library and how to access that information. Although some individual students may not have benefited as much as others, the majority of them did appear to have gained something from the experience.

The scores of the students enrolled in the upper classmen only sections were analyzed separately. Scores in these sections also proved to be significantly different with post-test scores exceeding pre-test ones. Although students were older and more college experienced, they still appeared to benefit from the program. It seems that upper classmen as well as freshmen have something to gain from the program.

Since this investigation was more a field study than a laboratory experiment, it was impractical (as well as unethical) to designate any portion of the English 3 population as a control group who were denied the library session experience. However, a small group of students did fill

out the pre- and post-tests, but did not go to the library. This group of students cannot be called a control group in the real sense of the word, since for the most part they were self-selected. But it is interesting to note that their pre- and post-test scores are not significantly different. The large majority of these students were upper classmen who were given the option of not attending the library session if they felt that they had enough bibliographic expertise. One might expect that their pre-test scores would be significantly higher than the scores of those students who participated in the entire program. This did not prove to be the case. These supposedly knowledgeable students scored no better on their pre-tests than those with little or no college library experience.

A span of three weeks separated the pre- and post-test situations. Many things could have occurred during that time to account for the change in test scores. Yet the data reported here strongly supports the notion that it was the library session that contributed to this change. It seems unlikely that a majority of the 241 students involved had experiences outside the program that greatly affected their library expertise. Certainly the 31 students who did not attend the library session did not appear to have spontaneously gained any such insight during the same period of time.

A belief in the value of BI is one of the cornerstones of librarianship. Librarians have long felt that learning how to function in the library would benefit students during their college careers and hopefully all through life. Many programs of BI have been developed with the hope of reaching large numbers of students. The English 3-Library Instruction Program in its first year at UCLA appears to be successfully doing just that. It has won friends for the library among teachers and

students alike. Thanks to this new BI program over 750 students each quarter are introduced to the library and its staff. And they are coming back; to work, to increase their skills and to make use of the vast resources available to them in the UCLA library system.

REFERENCES

1. Richard Hume Werking, "Evaluating Bibliographic Education: A Review and Critique," Library Trends 29 (Summer 1980), 163.
2. Nancy Fjallbrant and Malcolm Stevenson, User Education in Libraries, (London: Clive Bingley, 1978), 56.
3. Arthur P. Young, "Research on Library-User Education: A Review Essay," in Educating the Library User, ed. John Lubans Jr. (New York: Bowker, 1974), 7.
4. Susan Burton, "Objective Tests as an Evaluation Tool," in Library Instruction in the Seventies: State of the Art, ed. Hannelore B. Rader (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Pienian Press, 1977), 100.
5. Thomas Kirk, "Evaluation of Library Orientation and Instruction Programs: A Taxonomy," in Planning and Developing a Library Orientation Program, ed. Mary Bolner (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Pienian Press, 1975), 42-44.
6. Donna Bentley, "Long Term Evaluation of GSLIS 110" (Specialization paper submitted in partial requirements for MLS degree, Graduate School of Library and Information Science, UCLA, 1981).

TABLE 1

Mean Pre- and Post-Test Scores for All Subjects

	N	Usage	Attitude	Skills
Pre Test	241	12.49	35.50	18.52
Post Test	241	15.23	38.34	22.47

TABLE 2

Mean Pre- and Post-Test Scores - Upperclassmen Only

N=32

	Usage	Attitude	Skills
Pre Test	14.12	36.16	16.94
Post Test	15.56	38.47	22.88

TABLE 3

Mean Pre- and Post-Test Scores for Students Not Attending Library Session (N=31)

	Usage	Attitude	Skills
Pre Test	12.29	36.90	19.09
Post Test	12.52	38.55	20.52